

□ 1451

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 2 o'clock and 51 minutes p.m.

(Thereupon, the Members sat for the official photograph of the House of Representatives for the 110th Congress.)

## RECESS

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair in one or two minutes.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 54 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1455

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR) at 2 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.

## DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 473 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2638.

□ 1459

## IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2638) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, with Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I want to start by saying how proud I am of the work of our subcommittee and its fine staff that has been done over the last number of months.

Through the 20 hearings we have held so far this year, featuring testimony from Department officials, watch dog agencies and outside experts, numerous security vulnerabilities and management problems have been identified and solutions offered. I believe that the bill reported by the committee is well

informed by what we learned in these hearings.

I want to express my gratitude to the distinguished gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS), both for his leadership as the inaugural chairman of this subcommittee and more recently for his significant contributions as ranking member. Mr. ROGERS established a strong, bipartisan approach to providing vigilant oversight of the Department, and I have endeavored to continue on that path.

I also want to pay tribute to Martin Sabo, the former ranking member of this subcommittee, who is an example to all of us not only for his expertise and leadership on homeland security issues, but also his commitment to public service and to this institution.

And I don't want to go any further without expressing my respect for and gratitude to the professional staff of the subcommittee, both majority and minority. Beverly Pheto has been an exemplary clerk. Her mastery of the issues facing the Department and each of its components has been invaluable. And I cannot underestimate the contributions of Stephanie Gupta, Jeff Ashford, Jim Holm, and Shalanda Young on the majority side; and Tom McLemore, Ben Nicholson, and Christine Kojac on the minority side, as well as Darek Newby of my personal staff. Our subcommittee relies on the professionalism and expertise of these individuals. They are performing an invaluable service to the country.

Mr. Chairman, in total, the bill before us contains \$36.3 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$2.5 billion, or more than 7 percent, above the funding appropriated in 2007, including funding given an emergency designation in the 2007 bill. That so-called "emergency" funding was primarily for border security needs that have necessarily been absorbed into the baseline for fiscal year 2008. The bill contains \$2 billion, or 5 percent, more than the amounts requested by President Bush. I hope my colleagues will agree that the country's outstanding homeland security vulnerabilities, including border security, more than justify this level of funding.

This bill does four important things: First, it provides funding to address our country's most pressing security vulnerabilities with a new emphasis on our ports and on rail and transit systems.

Secondly, the bill provides critically needed funding to our States and communities to confront not only the threat of terrorist activity but also natural disasters and the emergency situations that must be dealt with in our community every day. Homeland security requires a faithful partnership among the Federal Government, States, and local communities. And this bill honors that partnership.

Thirdly, the bill helps to ensure that taxpayer dollars are well spent by requiring specific management reforms related to contracting, procurement,

and competition. It cuts \$1.2 billion below the fiscal 2007 levels and \$244 million below the requested amounts for programs and activities that are not performing well or for which increased or level funding has not been adequately justified; and it withholds a total of \$1.9 billion for various programs until the Department submits detailed expenditure plans.

And, fourth, the bill takes a long-term approach by requiring outside reviews of several major programs and activities to ensure that long-term investments of taxpayer money are made wisely and productively. For example, we are commissioning studies by the National Academies of Science on the current direction of the BioWatch program and on the Department's risk analysis capabilities and the improvements needed to ensure that investments are well targeted.

The funding increases provided in this bill address the security vulnerabilities identified by numerous expert groups, including the 9/11 Commission and the Hart-Rudman Commission. They also fund security actions mandated in the SAFE Ports Act and the Katrina Reform Act.

Aviation explosive detection systems are funded in total at \$849 million, \$324 million more than the regular 2007 bill. Air cargo security is funded at \$73 million, \$18 million more than the 2007 bill. And the bill directs TSA to double the amount of cargo it screens prior to loading onto passenger aircraft.

Transit security grants are funded at \$400 million, \$225 million more than the 2007 bill. Port security grants are funded at \$400 million, \$190 million more than the 2007 bill. An additional \$40 million is provided for the Coast Guard to implement the requirements of the SAFE Ports Act.

Emergency Management Performance Grants are funded at \$300 million, \$100 million more than the 2007 bill. Metropolitan Medical Response System Grants are funded at \$50 million, \$17 million more than 2007. State Homeland Security and Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention grants are funded at \$950 million; that is \$50 million more than 2007. Urban area security grants are funded at \$800 million, \$30 million more than the 2007 bill. REAL ID and interoperable communication grants are funded in total at \$100 million, in contrast to no funding provided in 2007. Fire grants are funded at \$800 million, \$138 million more than 2007. And FEMA management and administration is funded at \$685 million, \$150 million more than 2007.

Mr. Chairman, I want to highlight a number of other provisions in the bill that are particularly important. We have all heard about contracts and awards from the Department that were not competed. FEMA recently submitted a list of nearly 4,000 contracts that were never competitively bid. This bill mandates that all grant and contract funds be awarded through full and open competitive processes except